

For information

SIGNIFICANT FIREARMS INTERDICTION – MAY 2020

For the Minister

ISSUE

On May 27, 2020, the Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) interdicted and seized 65 prohibited firearms, making it the largest single prohibited firearms seizure recorded in CBSA history. The purpose of this note is to provide an overview of the seizure and to provide an update on several other firearms initiatives and successes.

BACKGROUND

On May 27, 2020, the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) Region Firearms Interdiction Team (FIT) examined a commercial shipment of 12 packages declared as “firearms or parts.” The shipment arrived _____ destined for a bonded warehouse in Brampton. After initial review of the paperwork, which raised questions for the FIT officers, the shipment was referred for examination. Upon examination, FIT officers discovered 65 prohibited revolvers (two different types), which were seized with no terms of release.

A news release is being developed, along with a communications plan to highlight the interdiction.

Seizure and firearms smuggling charges

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. Criminal Investigations continues to work to establish whether this complicity exists.

In addition, the CBSA's Intelligence and Enforcement Branch (IEB) will work with internal partners to review current policies. This work will also identify whether gaps exist in the Agency policy framework that can be exploited by threat actors and, if so, how to address them.

CONSIDERATIONS

The GTA FIT, established in January 2020, completes compliance verification of all firearms and firearms parts imported into the GTA Region. While the smuggling of illicit firearms has always been a priority for the CBSA, an additional focus on declared firearms will allow the Agency to confirm that firearms are appropriately declared and imported, and not diverted or intended for illicit use. In the last three months, the FIT has intercepted multiple suppressors a handgun that resulted in a controlled delivery, and numerous declarations of airsoft guns, which included many replica firearms and two fully automatic assault rifle receivers.

Other CBSA Intelligence and Enforcement firearms initiatives

The CBSA's IEB is finalizing its integrated, intelligence-led and partnership-focused strategy, Combatting Illicit Firearms in Our Communities. This national strategy will focus on "pre" (intelligence), "at" (interdiction), and "post" (investigation) border initiatives to ensure that the border is not used for the entry of illicit firearms.

The National Firearms Intelligence Desk will also be established to bring together subject-matter experts and coordinate intelligence sharing, investigations, and operations across the country. Finally, work will continue to strengthen criminal investigation capabilities and enhance domestic and international partnerships on combatting firearms.

Partnerships

In addition to existing partnerships with domestic law enforcement partners on firearms initiatives, the IEB is enhancing its relationship with the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police by participating in the Special Purpose Firearms Committee; is an active member of the Canadian Integrated Response to Organized Crime, where it presented on seized firearms suppressors; and is reviewing its participation in strategic joint forces operations such as the Ontario Provincial Weapons Enforcement Unit (PWEU), in which it currently has one member.

The CBSA does have interactions with the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF) through its participation in the PWEU and through partnerships with other

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police services. However, the IEB is finalizing a plan to begin negotiations to establish a bilateral information-sharing agreement with the ATF. This direct relationship will support CBSA-led firearms intelligence and smuggling investigations.

Finally, the Director General for Intelligence and Targeting, along with Regional Directors General from Ontario, will meet with GTA police chiefs in mid-June 2020. This will be an opportunity for executive-level conversations about CBSA firearms efforts and capabilities, with the goal of working more closely with GTA police services.

NEXT STEPS

The CBSA will continue its investigation into the significant interdiction of May 27, 2020, and issue a news release. It will also finalize the IEB Firearms Strategy and continue to strengthen partnerships in this regard.

Please note that I am available to discuss, or have CBSA officials brief your staff, at your convenience.



June 08, 2020

John Ossowski
President

c.c.: Mr. Rob Stewart, Deputy Minister
Public Safety Canada



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For information

NOVA SCOTIA MASS SHOOTING OVERVIEW

For the Minister

ISSUE

The purpose of this briefing note is to provide an overview of Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) involvement to date in the investigation of the April 18–19, 2020, mass shooting in Nova Scotia (NS) that left 22 victims plus the gunman dead. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) issued a media release on June 4, 2020, updating the public on the investigation and identifying that three of the weapons found on the suspect were illegally obtained in the United States (US).

BACKGROUND

On Sunday morning of April 19, 2020, CBSA intelligence teams learned through media of an active shooter incident taking place in Colchester County, NS. Intelligence proactively researched the Intelligence Management System and the Integrated Customs Enforcement System with the intent to provide assistance to the RCMP as appropriate. Social media releases from the RCMP identified the shooter and stated that he was dressed in an RCMP uniform and driving a replica RCMP cruiser. CBSA systems checks revealed information on the suspect that included the shooter's name, addresses, licence plates, NEXUS card photograph, and suspected spouse's name. This information was proactively disclosed by the Region to the RCMP pursuant to section 107 of the *Customs Act*. In addition, an offer of further assistance was extended to the RCMP.

Preliminary CBSA findings

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CBSA investigation

Through information obtained from the RCMP, it was determined that three of the four firearms that were in the possession of the subject originated in the US and had not been lawfully imported into Canada.

The CBSA and the RCMP agreed to conduct a joint investigation in which the CBSA would lead the firearms-smuggling investigation and the RCMP would focus on investigating the mass shooting. On April 28, 2020, the Agency's Criminal Investigations Section in Halifax opened an investigation into the importation of these prohibited firearms and devices, and one RCMP member was assigned to assist.

The investigation remains ongoing.

COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

On June 4, 2020, the RCMP issued a media release indicating that the investigation into the firearms in the possession of the subject remains ongoing with domestic and international law enforcement partners. The media release confirmed that all of the firearms in the subject's possession (four) were obtained illegally, and that three of them were obtained illegally in the United States.

The CBSA has already publicly indicated that it has launched an investigation and is working with the RCMP. The June 4, 2020, RCMP media release may lead to queries directed to the Agency. However, as the investigation is ongoing, there is limited information that can be released. However, CBSA Communications has developed high-level media lines in preparation. CBSA and RCMP communications teams continue to work together.

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NEXT STEPS

The CBSA will rely largely on joint investigative efforts with the RCMP going forward to avoid duplication and to avoid risking negatively impacting either investigation. It is expected that, due to the scope and complexity of the RCMP's investigation, the investigation will move slowly and take considerable time. The Intelligence and Enforcement Branch will continue to provide appropriate updates.

Please note that I am available to discuss, or have CBSA officials brief your staff, at your convenience.



June 05, 2020

John Ossowski
President

c.c.: Mr. Rob Stewart, Deputy Minister
Public Safety Canada